

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church – Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Tempe, Arizona

Holy Trinity Sunday

June 15, 2025

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Blessed by the Triune God

²²The LORD told Moses ²³to speak to Aaron and to his sons and to tell them to bless the Israelites with these words: ²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you. ²⁵The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. ²⁶The LORD look on you with favor and give you peace. ²⁷In this way they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them. — Numbers 6:22-27

On this Father's Day, I am thankful for the Christian dad that I have. Growing up, I was blessed to have a dad who brought me to worship every single Sunday. I even remember one occasion in which my dad threw a shovel into the trunk in case there was too much snow on the roads on the way to church. I guess he planned he would dig the wheels out and keep on going. I am thankful for Christian fathers who love their kids so much that they share their heavenly Father with them.

As this day is also Holy Trinity Sunday, we can consider the blessing of gathering to worship our Triune God. As we gather for worship, our pattern of worship is a blessing. Much of what my Father brought me to hear and see at worship has remained the same for when I bring my children to worship today. One benefit that we have in our worship services is the consistency of pattern. Although many aspects of the services change from week to week, such as the prayers, readings, and hymns. Other aspects of the services remain the same, such as the historical Biblical songs that surround the Lord's Supper, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and the presence of the creeds. Consistency and repetition are wonderful teaching tools. Through consistent patterns of worship and repeatedly attending, the Words of God will be placed on the heads and hearts of young and old alike through this pattern of worship.

One consistent pattern of the worship service is the fact that we end the services with a blessing. A blessing is a powerful word of God spoken upon people. One of the prominent blessings that is spoken at the end of our worship services is called the Aaronic Blessing. This is the blessing that the LORD gave to Moses to share with Aaron and his sons. The priests would speak this blessing on God's people. When this blessing was spoken upon them, the people were blessed by the Triune God. Today, when the blessing is spoken upon you, you too are blessed by the Triune God.

Today, our attention is brought to this Aaronic Blessing, which is recorded in the book of Numbers. In this section of Numbers, the Lord is giving his people, as a wonder in the wilderness, various rules of operation. These rules for life would govern their life at home through moral instructions. These rules would govern their life in society with the civil code. These rules also governed their approach to worship of the LORD.

Today's consideration is in the section that covers the rules for worship. At this time, they would worship the LORD in a temporary structure called the tabernacle. This instruction would remain when they built a permanent structure called the temple. History even tells us that this practice of speaking the blessing continues into the synagogue services as well. When the Israelites gathered to worship the LORD, the priests would speak these words over them. They were then blessed by the Triune God.

Although the people of Israel, perhaps, would not have had a full comprehension of the nature of the Triune God, they certainly had a wonderful relationship of love with him. He had revealed himself to them by the name "Yahweh" or "Jehovah." In our English translations, we represent that name with the word Lord in all capital letters.

The LORD was his name. As God revealed his name, the name showed his character of being the God of free and flowing love and stern justice. He was the law and gospel Lord. Listen to how God described himself to Moses, "The LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed: 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth, maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving guilt and rebellion and sin. He will by no means clear the guilty. He calls their children and their children's children to account for the guilt of the fathers, even to the third and the fourth generation.'" (Exodus 34:6-7) In the Aaronic Blessing, this is the name that was spoken upon the people.

Let's now consider this blessing that was spoken upon the people. Although the Israelites may not have had a full comprehension of the truths of the Triune nature of God, God is and always remains the same. He has also given us a clear testimony regarding who he is. As we consider this blessing in relation to this testimony, we can hear the actions and interactions of the Triune God in what is said.

As we consider each of these phrases, we can think about the works of each person of the Triune God. However, we will do go to remember that in the complexities of the Triune God, all three persons are always present and active in these acts of our LORD.

The blessing begins by saying, "The LORD bless you and keep you." In this first phrase, we can consider the work of the Heavenly Father. When we consider the work of the Father, we can think about all that God has done in creating us and protecting us. When we think of God's work in providing for our daily needs, we think primarily of the works of the Father. We call God our Father because he cares for us like a loving Father. He gave us life. He protects us from the dangers of this world. Daily, he provides for all of our needs.

The blessing continues by saying, "The LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you." In this phrase, there is a recognition that by nature, we do not deserve God's loving disposition shining upon us. By nature, we are sinners. By nature, we are God's enemies. But by his grace, that disposition has changed. In this phrase, we can think primarily about the work of the Son. The only-begotten Son of God took flesh to live, die, and rise for us. This is Jesus

Christ. The grace of the Triune God is shown to us to the greatest extent in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Finally, the blessing concludes with the statement, “The LORD look on you with favor and give you peace.” With this, we can think of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace to create faith in our hearts. This faith then receives the grace and favor of God, which was demonstrated on the cross, where the Son of God died for us. Through this faith, the Holy Spirit gives us peace. This is the peace that transcends all understanding. This is the peace of knowing that we will be with our Triune God forever in heaven.

This is the blessing that was spoken upon the people of Israel at their worship services. Their faith looked forward to all these things that the Triune God would do for them. We now look backward, seeing the fulfillment of all such things. When this was spoken upon them, they were blessed by the Triune God. Now, we have this blessing spoken upon us as well. We, too, are blessed by the Triune God.

Christians did not always have this blessing spoken upon them during worship services. Although there are some examples in which this was part of the Christian worship throughout the centuries, it did not come into prominence until Martin Luther included it in his worship orders in 1525 and 1526. Ever since then, it has been commonplace for this Triune blessing to be spoken over Christians during the worship service. You are blessed by the Triune God.

How do you consider such a blessing? In your mind, are these just throwaway words? Maybe these are just the words that mark the end of the service in your mind. Something that isn’t all that meaningful. Perhaps you think of this as simply a pious wish. You think of these words as simply nice things that are said with no real substance.

In either misunderstanding, there would seem to be a first commandment sin problem. The first commandment tells us to “fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” When we disregard his Word as nothing more than garnishes to the meal of his service, we are failing to do this. When we doubt his ability to truly bless us, we are failing to do this. Therefore, we are sinning.

God’s blessings spoken upon you are his powerful, performative word spoken upon you. In the Creation account from Genesis, God blessed the animals and humans when he gave them the ability to be fruitful and multiply. God’s spoken blessing is powerful. You do not need to doubt his power and the power of his word. You are blessed by the Triune God.

At the end of this worship service, the powerful blessing of the Triune God will be spoken upon you. I will lift my hands above my head. I will share with you the words that the LORD gave to Moses to give to Aaron. I will say, “The LORD bless you and keep you, the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the LORD look on you with favor and give you peace.” As I end these words, I will make the sign of the cross to remind you that this is all true and confident for you because of Christ Jesus. As you leave the service, you will leave as one

blessed by the Triune God. Not because of Pastor Pflughoeft. Not because of Moses or Aaron. But because of the Triune God and what he has done for you.

After this service, you can go and live as one who has been blessed by the Triune God. This blessing will characterize your week. You receive a person's word of grace from God. You receive confidence in all things that your sins are forgiven.

In this blessing, you receive a sustaining peace as one who has God's name placed upon you. Challenges will come this week. Problems will continue. But you are blessed by the Triune God. God gives you peace and ongoing care through these challenges of life.

This blessing gives you identity this week as well. You go out into the week not as an unimportant or uncared-for person. Instead, you are a blessed child of Heavenly Father. This world is full of all sorts of anxieties. This blessing prepares you to go out into this world.

This blessing also sends you off into your various vocations. God has spoken a word of favor upon you. In this life, you do not need to earn his favor. No! The Triune God looks upon you and smiles upon you. He has shown you favor in Christ. Therefore, you do not need to earn his love through the things you do. He already loves you. Instead, as one who has been blessed by the Triune God, you can serve others in love. You can serve your friends, family, neighbors, employers, and many other people in the things you do throughout the week.

Dear children of the Heavenly Father, this blessing is not simply a throw-away phrase. This is not merely the marker that the worship service is over. This is the powerful performative word of God spoken upon you. What a blessed way to end a worship service. Cherish it. Know it. Live it. You are blessed by the Triune God.

On this Father's Day, I am thankful for Christian fathers who bring their children to worship their Triune God. When they bring their children here, they receive a wonderful blessing to move them throughout the week. Today, at the end of the service, we will be sent to serve as those who are blessed by the Triune God. Amen.